

Section II: Functional Annexes

Purpose

The Purpose of this annex is to establish public awareness of hazards and to provide active channels for informing and advising the public on appropriate actions before, during, and after a county emergency;

- ❖ To provide for effective collection, and dissemination of information, to control rumors and to minimize uninformed public response.

It is not intended to define or supplant Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for any particular agency, but provide a framework for operations in the event of mutual aid between agencies. Special emphasis is placed on the use of mitigation, phased planning, and public education before an incident to increase the safety of the citizens of Stillwater County.

Situation and Assumptions

1. Situation

- A. The Hazard Analysis concluded that the top dangers in the county were Wildfire, Severe Weather, Flood, Hazardous Materials, and Earthquake.
- B. An emergency situation may occur with little or no warning. Therefore, the public must have advance understanding of the potential hazards affecting them and the protective actions to be taken. Pre-scripted Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages may be utilized to pass initial information and instructions to the media and the general public.
- C. During an emergency situation, it is essential that the public be provided with timely, accurate and easily understood information on the protective measures to be taken to save lives and protect property.
- D. Centralized county/state coordination and dissemination of factual, official information is necessary to assure a well-informed public, to avoid or minimize the release of misinformation, and to deflate rumors.
- E. Should the Joint Information System (JIS) concept be activated, it may operate out of a Joint Information Center (JIC). Stillwater County Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) and other responding agencies should operate and develop their emergency public information out of the JIC.
- F. Billings has 21 and Red Lodge has 1 commercial radio stations, providing coverage countywide.
- G. Stillwater County uses NOAA and the NWS to send out all alerts, which then hit all regional media outlets in the area.
- H. Stillwater County does not have a daily newspaper and relies on the Billings Gazette for daily printed news. The Stillwater County News provides weekly news information for most of the county, with maybe the exception of Park City which relies more on the Laurel Outlook for weekly news information in print.
- I. The Stillwater County News is distributed throughout the county.

2. Assumptions

- A. A public education and information program will help save lives and property during

Section II: Functional Annexes

emergencies and disasters if the public knows how to prepare for them.

- B. Information is one of the first casualties of a disaster. Rumors abound and information is sketchy at best. It may be hours before officials know the facts. The lack information or contradictory information will cause confusion.
- C. In an emergency situation, the public will demand information about the emergency. The local print and broadcast media will perform an essential role in providing emergency instructions and status information to the public.
- D. Depending on the severity of the emergency or the media's conception of the severity of the emergency, regional and national media also will demand information, and may play a role in reassuring, or alarming, distant relatives of the disaster area population.
- E. Telephone communications may be disrupted or overloaded. Local and regional radio/television stations without emergency power may be off the air for lengthy periods of time.

Concept of Operations

1. General

The Town of Columbus/Stillwater County is committed to a proactive public information program during a disaster or emergency.

Notification of citizens should be made as soon as possible via the Automated Emergency Alert System (EAS), the "E911" system, mobile PA systems, and local radio/TV broadcasts. The DESC or his deputy should activate the EAS by contacting the **NWS (1-406-652-3214/ 1-800-240-4596)** to initiate a public broadcast message.

- ❖ **EAS (Emergency Alert System):** The Emergency Alert System has replaced the Emergency Broadcast System as the primary digitized warning system for the South Eastern Regional Area, which includes Stillwater County. The system is designed to provide a 24-hour warning point to the public for emergencies and disasters. Stillwater County uses NOAA and the NWS as it contact which then sends out all alerts to the mass media. They have generators and backup power to enable broadcasting during power outages. This makes it essential for people to have battery powered radios to receive these important messages during times of emergency.

At the earliest convenience, updates and important information should also be placed on the County Website.

- Stillwater County public information and education program should:
 - A. Provide support during the four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery operations.
 - B. Provide the public with accurate, timely, and easily understood event-related information concerning protective actions, route restrictions, health notices, and emergency assistance information.
 - C. Control rumors.
 - D. Coordinate information releases with all participating public and private agencies, emergency

Section II: Functional Annexes

responders, and all levels of government to support public officials and media representatives in satisfying the public's demand for accurate and consistent information.

- E. Limit public information activities to County-specific events and actions. Federal and State governments are responsible for information related to their jurisdiction.
- The County's Incident Command System (ICS), Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and Joint Information Center (JIC) should support public information.
 - A. The County DES PIO or an alternate may serve as spokesperson for the EOC and Incident Commander (IC) during an emergency situation. Organizations not represented by the EOC may use their own PIO.
 - B. The DES PIO should issue news releases on behalf of the county after coordinating current information with other agencies. Member(s) of the EOC and cooperating partners should receive copies of all releases. EOC and/or IC approval is required before issuing policy-related news releases. All press releases should also be posted to the city/county web site.

Direction and Control

- See the Direction and Control Annex in Section II: Functional Annexes.
- The DES Coordinator is responsible for all pre-emergency education and information programs. Tasks may be delegated to the PIO as necessary.
- The overall responsibility for public information in an incident rests with the Incident Commander (IC) acting through the IC's Information Officer (IO), when designated. In the absence of such a public information officer, information should be made available from the EOC.
- For larger-scale emergencies, the EOC should provide public information through its appointed PIO.
- All information releases should be coordinated with the IC, (or designated representative) for approval prior to release to the public/media.
- News releases from other facilities, counties or state-level events should be coordinated with their appropriate representatives.
- **Joint Information Center (JIC):**
 - Preceding or during extreme emergency situations, a Joint Information Center may be activated. The JIC is established to provide a single coordinated focal point for all current official public information.
 - The JIC should be organized and activated by DES in the EOC.
 - Once a JIC is established, news releases, instructions, or official information originated by the various participating organizations should be channeled and verified through the JIC to ensure less risk of conflicting statements.
 - A Media Center should be organized at the JIC where media staff (television, radio, and print) can receive up-to-date information regarding the incident.
 - Visitors to the JIC should be limited to County, State, Federal, or other appropriate organizations, and members of the media.
 - Briefing schedules and news statements should be made available to the media.

Section II: Functional Annexes

- The JIC should be declared operational when the DES PIO, or alternate, is present, as well as sufficient personnel to perform incoming inquiries and administrative functions. The county JIC Initiating Checklist is found at Appendix 2.
- The JIC, when operational, should serve as a location where most incident-related inquiries from the citizenry may be directed. Some inquiries, such as those involving claims, may be routed to another location.
- **Public Inquiry:**
 - If a JIC is not operational, a Public Inquiry Center (PIC) should be established to provide a single point of contact for the general public to call and receive current, accurate information regarding a specific event or threat. The DESC also manages and coordinates staffing of the PIC using trained volunteers.
 - Currently, the Stillwater County PIC consists of three “informational hotline” telephones manned by volunteers in the EOC as available.
 - The PIC serves a dual purpose. It disseminates information by responding to requests from the public and gathers information by identifying trends, inaccurate information, misunderstandings, or misconceptions reported by the public or reflected by their inquiries. If the misunderstandings indicate an isolated concern, the PIC staff should address the matter directly with the caller. If a pattern of confusion emerges, they should notify the JIC (if operational), which then addresses the situation through the news media using traditional tools such as news releases and news conferences. If the JIC is not operational, the operator should notify the DESC to take action.
 - Until the EOC is activated and the PIC Hotlines are operational, answers to queries from the public should be provided by the DESC, coordinating with the ICP.
 - The telephone numbers for the PIC Hotlines should be released to the local news media for dissemination to the public by the EAS.
 - Emergency information should also be posted and updated regularly on the County and City Websites.

Operational Roles and Responsibilities

- **Stillwater County DES Coordinator**

- Mitigation Phase**

- Establish an effective County emergency public information and education organization.
 - Conduct vigorous public awareness campaigns to educate the public of dangers from potential hazards and provide them with information on the actions necessary to save lives and protect property.
 - Stress hazard awareness and personal preparedness in presentations with the media, schools and service clubs.
 - Stay current or familiar with the latest techniques for emergency management information.
 - Meet regularly with members of the media to foster a close working relationship.
 - Familiarize the media with this annex. Consider their recommendations to improve it.

Section II: Functional Annexes

- Identify private resources to assist in the public education and information process.
- Include the media in the planning process.
- Conduct a Disaster Preparedness Month annually in September. Publicize disaster preparedness that month in the media and in speeches to service clubs and schools.
- Conduct an Earthquake Preparedness Month each October in commemoration with the state of the great earthquakes that have struck the state.
- Stress winter safety in November.
- Stress flood preparedness in April to remind the public to mitigate flooding and to buy flood insurance.

Preparedness Phase

- Disseminate emergency information and instructions to the public, to include, if necessary, twenty-four hour telephone numbers.
- Plan and coordinate with the local news media to assure assistance in disseminating emergency information and instructions.
- Designate a facility where media representatives can be briefed.
- Involve the media in exercise critiques.
- Test the EAS at least annually.
- Prepare situation status boards to record information on disasters or emergencies.
- Review and update this annex.
- Maintain office and home telephone numbers of key contact personnel for each radio and TV station, and the newspapers in Billings, Columbus and Laurel.

Response Phase

- Inform the public through the EAS. Ensure that the EAS is not overly used to cause undue public concern.
- Ensure the media has access to the EOC.
- Appoint a PIO. If the primary PIO is not available, the new PIO should be experienced in the roles and responsibilities of a Public Information Officer.
- Determine the need for and activate JIC.
- When the JIC is activated, organize a sufficient group of personnel to permit extended hours of operation during an emergency or disaster, if needed.

Recovery Phase

- Continue public information operations as long as required by the IC/EOC.
- Provide news releases with major emphasis on:
 - Types and locations of emergency assistance available including contacts, phone numbers, location(s) (e.g. food and water points), information concerning disaster claims application centers, and trash and debris disposal instructions;
 - Public Health Notices;
 - Restricted areas;
 - Movement or travel restrictions;
 - Contacts and phone numbers for missing person information;

Section II: Functional Annexes

- Contacts and phone numbers for local non-emergency assistance; and
- Public safety notices.
- Stress mitigation efforts, structural and non-structural, to department heads involved in recovery efforts.
- Assess effectiveness of public information and education program.

■ **Stillwater County Public Information Officer:**

Mitigation Phase

- Stay current of familiar with the latest techniques for emergency management information.
- Meet regularly with members of the media to foster a close working relationship.
- Conduct public education and media programs as needed.

- Preparedness Phase
- Maintain close liaison with local, state, and federal PIO's as well as the media to enhance public preparedness and awareness prior to an emergency, and to facilitate dissemination of actual incident information.
- Participate in emergency drills and exercises to test plans for effective and consistent information release.
- Attend PIO conferences and training sessions.
- Compile and prepare emergency information for the public in case of an emergency.
- Become aware of the procedures to utilize the Emergency Alert System. Persons designated as PIOs may assist in preparation of EAS messages and should monitor all EAS announcements.
- Coordinate public education/awareness campaigns with the DES office.

Response Phase

- Reports to the EOC, upon activation.
- Contact the media and informs them about the emergency.
- Serves as an official Stillwater County spokesperson and the sole source for dissemination of official emergency related materials to the public. Remind agency heads to clear all releases through you.
- Supervises the preparation of emergency announcements for EAS broadcast.
- Activates the Public Information web site and regularly updates it with the latest information.
- Coordinates all public announcements with the Incident Commander.
- Issues news media releases from the EOC, or, if activated, establishes and coordinates all actions at the Joint Information Center (JIC).
- Provides for briefings with the participation of the CEO and other involved officials.
- Coordinates news releases with parties involved in an emergency and the State DES PIO.
- Verifies the authenticity of incoming information.
- Verifies that duplicate or contradictory releases are not being made.
- Takes action to maintain control of rumors.

Section II: Functional Annexes

- Coordinates with the American Red Cross to establish a single point of contact for the public to obtain information concerning missing relatives.
- Public Information Officers should provide news releases that emphasize the following:
 - A clear identification of the affected area
 - Timely, accurate and easily understood information on the situation.
 - Recommended or ordered protective actions.
 - Descriptions of local, State and Federal response to the emergency.
 - Identification of stations and times for information updates.
- At the end of an emergency situation, request that broadcast media announce the end of the emergency at regular intervals to ensure complete dissemination to the public.

- After an emergency is terminated, continue to provide information to the media concerning recovery operations.
- Maintains current files and accurate records of all information released to the public and media which should include, but not be limited to:
 - Name, agency, and phone number of the release initiator.
 - Text, tape, or video of the news release.
 - Substantiating information for the release.
 - Date and time information received.
 - Date and time information released.
 - How and to whom the news release was issued.
- These or similar responsibilities should apply to any PIO working in the Stillwater County JIC.

Recovery Phase

- Maintain status board.
- Continues to brief the media about continuing developments.
- Critique the public information response to the emergency with the media, DESC and agency heads.
- Incorporate appropriate recommendations to revise the plan.
- Release available statistics on disaster damage, injuries and fatalities.
- Inform the public on available assistance – and the location of shelters and disaster assistance centers.
- Provide the media information on the progress of recovery efforts.

- Considerations and Implementations Responsibilities
 - Rumor Control
 - Rumor Control is vital during emergency operations. Sensitive or critical information must be authorized and verified before release. Unconfirmed rumors or information from unauthorized sources may be responded to in the following manner:
 - “We will not confirm until we have been able to check out the information through authorized sources. Once we have confirmed information, we will release it to all members of the press at the same time.”

Section II: Functional Annexes

- Do not release information that might hinder emergency response, prejudice the outcome of an investigation, or pose a further threat to public safety. Examples include:
 - Personal conjecture about the course of the emergency or the conduct of response.
 - Speculation.
 - Demeaning information/statements.
 - Information that might compromise the effectiveness of response and recovery.
- Confidential Information
 - Confidential information is not to be released. This includes:
 - The names of victims or fatalities prior to notification of next-of-kin. (Identification and cause of death shall not be released without authorization from the Coroner).
 - Home phone numbers of city/county personnel and volunteer emergency workers, fire station numbers, and unpublished city/county numbers.
- Media Access to the Scene
 - Every effort should be made to allow the media access to the disaster area, consistent with safety.
- In cooperation with the EOC and on-scene personnel, the Incident Commander may allow media representatives restricted access to the scene, accompanied by a member of the Public Information staff. This should be done with regard to the safety of media personnel, the impact on response, and the wishes and concerns of the victims.
- The Public Information Officer should not allow media to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) except under limited, controlled circumstances, and only with prior approval of the Incident Commander or EOC Manager. Before being admitted to the EOC, media representatives shall display appropriate identification and shall be escorted by a member of the Public Information staff.
- If it is not safe or practical to admit all media representatives to the scene, a media “pool” may be created, where media representatives select one camera crew to take video footage for all. If even such controlled access is impractical, a “staged” photo opportunity to tape response vehicles or support activities may satisfy the media's need for video footage.
- Response personnel must be protected from unwanted media intrusion. Off-shift personnel should be provided uninterrupted rest. It may be necessary to provide security to facilities where response personnel are housed and disconnect the telephones to ensure privacy.
- Victims and families should have access to public officials without having to face media.

Section II: Functional Annexes

Try to provide a secure entrance to the city/county administrative offices, or arrange a briefing/interview room away from the media.

- Then media may be allowed access to response personnel at the discretion of the Incident Commander, only if such an interview does not interfere with the response efforts.
- Response personnel should not comment on the incident without knowledge and consent of the Public Information Officer or IC.
- Administration and Logistics.
- The DESC is responsible for the acquisition of appropriate equipment and supplies to support the public information and education program, and to ensure rapid activation of the JIC if necessary.
- Selection and training of persons to provide emergency information support services to the EOC and the JIC will be under the direct supervision of the DESC.

Section II: Functional Annexes

Appendix 1: Sample EAS Messages

EAS Message #1 Home Shelter

The following message has been released by Stillwater County DES and the Emergency Operations Center:

1. The _____ has announced that an emergency presently exists at _____. Persons living or working within an approximate _____ mile radius of this location are requested to take sheltering actions.
2. There is no need for residents to leave the area in order to take sheltering action.
3. Persons who have taken their shelter should observe the following procedures:
 - a. Close all doors and windows.
 - b. Disconnect air conditioners or fans.
 - c. Lower the thermostat setting of any heater or turn off air conditioner/evaporative cooler to minimize the intake of external air.
 - d. Keep pets inside, and to extent possible, bring farm animals under covered facilities.
4. People living, working, or traveling in the following areas are affected by this request:
(Repeat the list of areas on time, then continue the message.)
5. Persons living, working, or traveling in this area should take sheltering action. Persons traveling to home or work should proceed to their destination in an orderly fashion obeying all traffic regulations. Non-residents traveling in motor vehicles should clear the area in an orderly fashion.
6. All persons traveling in the area in motor vehicles should roll up windows, close air vents, and turn off air conditioners. If in an automobile, or when sheltering is not immediately available, improvised respiratory protection may be taken. Place a handkerchief, towel, or other similar item snugly over the nose and mouth until indoors.
7. You are **not** to do the following:
(Read statement A., if school is in session.)
 - A. You are requested not to telephone or go to the school your children are attending. They are in a covered protected environment and will be bused home when it is safe to do so.
 - B. Do not telephone town, county state, or federal officials directly involved. They will keep you informed of the situation through this station. Do not use the telephone except for medical emergencies.
8. The preceding has been an announcement from the Stillwater County Emergency Operations Center. It calls for all persons living or working within a _____ mile radius of _____ to take shelter. For further information, stay tuned to this station.

(Thereafter, this message should be repeated **every five minutes** until the station is informed by the EOC to end transmission.)

Section II: Functional Annexes

EAS Message #2: Evacuation

The following message had been released by Stillwater County DES and the Emergency Operations Center:

1. The Stillwater County Emergency Operations Center had announced that an emergency condition exists at _____ and recommends the evacuation of all persons living or working within an approximate _____ radius of this location.

2. This advisory affects persons living in the following area:

(Repeat the list of affected areas one time, then continue with message.)

3. Please use the following evacuation routes for your neighborhood. If you will need a place to stay, report to the mass care center located at _____.

(Repeat the list of affected areas one time, then continue the message.)

4. If you have housebound persons or invalids in your home and require assistance in moving them, contact Stillwater County Emergency Operations Center at _____.
5. Please cooperate by checking on persons who may live alone in your neighborhood. If they have no way of providing for their own transportation, please assist them if possible.
6. Persons affected by this evacuation advisory should prepare to spend a minimum of three days (72 hours) away from home and should have with them sufficient quantities of clothing, sleeping bags, or blankets, personal care items and prescription drugs for at least this period. Persons evacuating to mass care centers will be provided with food and sanitary facilities. Pet will **not** be allowed inside the mass care centers.
7. Farmers/ranchers affected by this evacuation advisory should shelter their animals and contact the County agricultural extension agent at _____ for further instructions regarding protection of livestock, foodstuffs, and regaining access to the evacuated area.
8. Persons planning to evacuate are reminded to take the following steps prior to leaving:
 - A. Secure your home and property.
 - B. Turn off all lights and electrical appliances.
 - C. Turn down any heating systems (or turn off air conditioning systems.)
 - D. Proceed calmly to your destination, obeying all traffic laws and driving carefully.
 - E. Please obey law enforcement officers and others who will be directing traffic along the evacuation routes.
9. The preceding has been an announcement from the Stillwater County Emergency Operations Center regarding recommendation by the _____ for the evacuation of all persons living within a _____ mile radius of _____. For further information, please stay tuned to this station.

(Thereafter, this message should be repeated **every five minutes** until the station is informed by the EOC to end transmission.)

Section II: Functional Annexes

EAS Message #3 School Evacuation

1. The following message had been released by the Stillwater County Emergency Operations Center. It supplements instructions given to the public concerning the evacuation announcement for an approximate _____ mile radius of _____.
2. Parents with children attending schools within a _____ mile radius of _____ are advised that their children are subject to a separate evacuation plan while school is in session. These schools are _____. Children at these schools will be taken directly to shelter areas. Parents are to meet their children at these shelter areas outside the emergency zone. ***I Repeat, children will be taken directly to areas outside the risk area where parents are to meet their children.*** Parents are not to report to their children's schools.
3. Children attending the schools in the risk area will be taken to the following areas where they may be picked up:

School:

Evacuation Area:

(Repeat list one time and continue the message.)

4. Parents are urged not to telephone or to go to the schools their children attend. To do so will only create confusion. Parents are to meet their children at the previously announced evacuation areas. ***I repeat***, parents are urged **not** to telephone or to go to the schools that their children attend, but to meet their children at the evacuation areas.
5. The preceding had been an announcement from the Stillwater County Emergency Operations Center giving instructions on where to meet their children who are attending schools within an approximate _____ mile radius of _____.

(Please repeat entire message one time.)

Section II: Functional Annexes

EAS Message #4 HazMat Incident

Stillwater County Disaster and Emergency Services brings you the following message:

An accident involving a hazardous material has occurred at the following location:

_____.

Due to the nature of the chemical involved, it is important that those living or working in the following areas evacuate immediately. Those people between _____ (north/south) and _____ (east/west) should leave the area immediately.

Before leaving, evacuees are asked to lock their homes and businesses and go to a location outside the affected area. Or you may go to the following reception center, _____.

Those needing assistance can call the following number: _____.

Section II: Functional Annexes

EAS Message #5 Street Closures/ Flooding

The Stillwater County Emergency Operations Center announces the current storm had caused severe/moderate flooding in several areas of the town/county.

As of _____ today, the following roads/streets are closed:

Please avoid these roads/streets. If you must travel, use alternative routes. Avoid low-lying roads near streams, creeks, and rivers. Do not drive over a flooded road or bridge. If your car stalls, abandon it immediately and get to higher ground. Be careful of attempting to walk through flood waters. If floodwaters are moving swiftly, as little as six inches of water can knock you off your feet. Roadblocks will be set up to prohibit access into affected areas.

Again the following roads/streets are closed:

Section II: Functional Annexes

EAS Message #6 Flooding Evacuation

The Stillwater County Emergency Operations Center announces the following message:

The flooding situation may worsen in parts of the town/county. For your own safety, you are strongly urged to evacuate the following areas as soon as possible:

If time permits, take essential items such as – **medicine, special foods, personal items, baby supplies, money, and valuable papers** – do not overload your vehicle. Secure your home or business before you leave. Check on neighbors who might need assistance.

If you cannot stay with relatives or friends outside the evacuation area, go to the following shelter location: _____.

If you have no form of transportation, or are physically unable to evacuate on your own, ask a neighbor to assist you, or call the following number: _____.

Section II: Functional Annexes

EAS Message #7: Snow Emergency

The Stillwater County Disaster and Emergency Services, in cooperation with the National Weather Service, announce a snow emergency has been declared due to the current weather conditions.

A Winter Storm Warning is effective until _____ for the following areas:

At least _____ inches of snow is expected with the storm. All persons are advised to stay indoors and travel only if necessary. If you must travel, take an emergency supply kit with you.

Again, a winter storm warning is in effect until _____ for the following areas:

Section II: Functional Annexes

Appendix 2: JIC Initiating Checklist

COMPLETED	TASK	DATE/TIME/INITIALS
	Incident Notification Received	
	Initial EAS Message Issued	
	EOC Activation Decision Made	
	JIC Activation Decision Made	
	JIC Location Selected	
	JIC Staff Call-Out Begun	
	JIC Staffing Call-Out Completed	
	JIC Operational	
	Initial Media Release Issued	
	Initial Media Briefing Begun	
	Initial Media Briefing Completed	

Primary EAS Station

KEMC – 91.7 FM

1500 University Drive

Billings, MT 59101

(the EAS is initiated by contacting the NWS (1-800-240-4596))

Appendix 3: Sheltering-in-Place

AMERICAN RED CROSS: FACT SHEET FOR CITIZENS

What Shelter-in-Place Means:

One of the instructions you may be given in an emergency where hazardous materials may have been released into the atmosphere is to shelter-in-place. This precaution aimed to keep you safe while remaining indoors. (This is not the same thing as going to a shelter in case of a storm.) Shelter-in-place means selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there. It does not mean sealing off your entire home or office building. If you are told to shelter-in-place, follow the instructions provided in this Fact Sheet.

Why You Might Need to Shelter-in-Place:

Chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants may be released accidentally or intentionally into the environment. Should this occur, information will be provided by local authorities on television and radio stations on how to protect you and your family. Because information will most likely be provided on television and radio, it is important to keep a TV or radio on, even during the workday. The important thing is for you to follow the instructions of local authorities and know what to do if they advise you to shelter-in-place.

How to Shelter-in-Place

At Home:

- Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains.
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
- Close the fireplace damper.
- Get your family's disaster supply kit and make sure the radio is working.
- Go to an interior room without windows that's above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.
- Bring your pets with you, and be sure to bring additional food and water supplies for them.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room you select. Call your emergency contact and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.
- Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room.
- Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

Section II: Functional Annexes

At Work:

- Close the business.
- Bring everyone into the room(s). Shut and lock the door(s).
- If there are customers, clients, or visitors in the building, provide for their safety by asking them to stay – not leave. When authorities provide directions to shelter-in-place, they want everyone to take those steps now, where they are, and not drive or walk outdoors.
- Unless there is an imminent threat, ask employees, customers, clients, and visitors to call their emergency contact to let them know where they are and that they are safe.
- Turn on call-forwarding or alternative telephone answering systems or services. If the business has voice mail or an automated attendant, change the recording to indicate that the business is closed, and that staff and visitors are remaining in the building until authorities advise it is safe to leave.
- Close and lock all windows, exterior doors, and any other openings to the outside.
- If you are told there is a danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains.
- Have employees familiar with your building's mechanical systems turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Some systems automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air – these systems, in particular, need to be turned off, sealed or disabled.
- Gather essential disaster supplies, such as non-perishable food, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, plastic sheeting, and plastic garbage bags.
- Select interior room(s) above the ground floor, with the fewest windows or vents. The room(s) should have adequate space for everyone to be able to sit in. Avoid overcrowding by selecting several rooms if necessary. Large storage closets, utility rooms, pantries, copy and conference rooms without exterior windows will work well. Avoid selecting a room with mechanical equipment like ventilation blowers or pipes, because this equipment may not be able to be sealed from the outdoors.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room(s) you select. Call emergency contacts and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.
- Use Duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door(s) and any vents into the room.
- Write down the names of everyone in the room, and call you business' designated emergency contact to report who is in the room with you, and their affiliation with your business (employee, visitor, client, customer.)
- Keep listening to the radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local official may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

At School:

- Close the school. Activate the school's emergency plan. Follow reverse evacuation procedures to bring students, faculty, and staff indoors.
- If there are visitors in the building, provide for their safety by asking them to stay – not leave. When authorities provide directions to shelter-in-place, they want everyone to take those steps now, where they are, and not drive or walk outdoors.

Section II: Functional Annexes

- Provide for answering telephone inquiries from concerned parents by having at least one telephone with the school's listed telephone numbers available in the room selected to provide shelter for the school secretary, or person designated to answer these calls. This room should also be sealed. There should be a way to communicate among all rooms where people are sheltering-in-place in the school.
- Ideally, provide for a way to make announcements over the school-wide public address system from the room where the top school official takes shelter.
- If children have cell phones, allow them to use them to call a parent or guardian to let them know that they have been asked to remain in school until further notice, and they are safe.
- If the school has voice mail, or an automated attendant, change the recording to indicate that the school is closed, students and staff are remaining in the building until the authorities advise that it is safe to leave.
- Provide directions to close and lock all windows, exterior doors, and any other openings to the outside.
- If you are told there is danger of explosion, direct that window shades, blinds, or curtains be closed.
- Have employees familiar with your building's mechanical systems turned off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems. Some systems automatically provide for exchange of inside air with outside air – these systems, in particular, need to be turned off, sealed or disabled.
- Gather essential disaster supplies, such as non-perishable food, bottled water, battery-powered radios, first aid supplies, flashlights, batteries, duct tape, plastic sheeting, and plastic garbage bags.
- Select interior room(s) above the ground floor, with the fewest windows or vents. The room(s) should have adequate space for everyone to be able to sit in. Avoid overcrowding by selecting several rooms if necessary. Classrooms may be used if there are no windows or the windows are sealed and cannot be opened. Large storage closets, utility rooms, meeting rooms, and even a gymnasium without exterior windows will work well.
- It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room(s) you select. Call emergency contacts and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.
- Bring everyone into the room, shut and lock the door.
- Use Duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door(s) and any vents into the room.
- Write down the names of everyone in the room, and call you schools' designated emergency contact to report who is in the room with you.
- Listen for an official announcement from school officials via the public address system, and stay where you are until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

In Your Vehicle:

If you are driving a vehicle and hear advice to "shelter-in-place" on the radio, take these steps:

- If you are very close to home, your office, or a public building, go there immediately and go inside.

Section II: Functional Annexes

Follow the shelter-in-place recommendations for the place you pick described above.

- If you are unable to get to a home or a building quickly and safely, then pull over to the side of the road. Stop your vehicle in the safest place possible. If it is sunny outside, it is preferable to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot, to avoid overheating.
- Turn off engine. Close windows and vents.
- If possible, seal the heating/air conditioning vents with duct tape.
- Listen to the radio regularly for updated advice and instructions.
- Stay where you are until you are told it is safe to get back on the road. Be aware that some roads may be closed or traffic detoured. Follow the directions of law enforcement officials.
- Local officials on the scene are the best source of information for your particular situation. Following their instructions during and after emergencies regarding sheltering, food, water, and cleanup methods is your safest choice.
- Remember that instructions to shelter-in-place are usually provided for durations of a few hours, not days or weeks. There is little danger that the room in which you are taking shelter will run out of oxygen and you will suffocate.